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TAGS: [EAID](#) [PHUM](#) [SCUL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [YM](#)
SUBJECT: DEMOCRACY STRATEGY AND GOALS: YEMEN

REF: A. 07 STATE 130991
[1](#)B. 07 SANAA 1891
[1](#)C. 06 SANAA 2854

Classified By: NEA DAS Kent Patton for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) The Department approves Embassy Sana,a,s proposed democracy strategy for the next twelve to eighteen months as discussed March 26 via video conference. Because Embassy Sana,a is on ordered departure, the original time line for implementing these strategies may have to be altered due to limited staffing. This cable summarizes the new strategy, which is an update to Embassy Sana,a,s previous democracy strategy (Ref B).

UPDATED DEMOCRACY STRATEGY

[1](#)2. (C) Embassy Sana,a prioritized three reform areas for the next twelve to eighteen months: freedom of expression, the rule of law, and electoral transparency and competition. Post intends to focus on programming in these areas, particularly in advance of parliamentary elections in 2009.

[1](#)3. (C) Objective 1: Reverse recent backsliding on freedom of expression. Implementation Strategy:

-- Speak out publicly in support of journalists and media outlets who report objectively and accurately, and encourage opposition parties, NGOs and like-minded governments to do the same.

-- Express our concern directly to the Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) when it interferes with independent media organizations, marginalizes independent voices, or intimidates journalists.

-- Engage with Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda (SCER) commissioners and staff to develop enhanced oversight of the official media to discourage inequalities in coverage of candidates for office in 2009 Parliamentary elections.

[1](#)4. (C) Objective 2: Raise the profile of rule of law issues, including the promotion of an independent judiciary and establishment of transparent electoral law and procedures. Implementation Strategy:

-- Engage the international community to speak out publicly and demarche key members of the Yemeni parliament to promote and elevate rule of law issues, such as the election, press, refugee, and counterterrorism laws, within the ROYG.

-- Support Yemen,s WTO accession process by encouraging the drafting of WTO-compliant laws and regulations and the provision of trade-related technical assistance in cooperation with appropriate ROYG officials.

-- Leverage the Secretary,s stated interest in visiting Yemen to serve as a catalyst to convince Saleh to approve reforms in advance of the Parliamentary elections.

-- Engage with ROYG to promote key democratic, economic, and investment reforms as vehicles to make Yemen more attractive to foreign investors.

15. (C) Objective 3: Increase capacity of Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda (SCER) to implement its responsibilities efficiently and transparently.
Implementation Strategy:

-- While pressing for the appointment of Commissioners for the SCER, continue publicly to support the goal of SCER and support the Commission,s technical staff as they prepare for next year,s vote.

-- Support continuing NDI and IFES efforts to assist SCER in the following four areas:

a. Strengthen the efficacy of domestic monitoring efforts to promote the integrity of the electoral process.

b. Encourage the SCER as it establishes an action plan to set electoral district boundaries to ensure parliamentary constituencies are in compliance with the legal requirement that they be demographically balanced and equal.

c. Assist SCER to address the problem of voter registration in a manner that is timely and transparent, to include the implementation of an effective voter registry.

d. Encourage the establishment of improved campaign-expenditure limits by amending existing campaign finance law in order to ensure transparency and bridge gaps in resources between political parties.

POINT OF CONTACT

16. (SBU) Please contact NEA/PI Charles Kiamie at (202) 776-8841 or KiamieCE@state.sgov.gov for any necessary further background information.
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